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URBAN DISTRICTS

of

BENFLEET, CANVEY ISLAND

and RAYLEIGH



HEALTH REPORT

for the year

1956

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the Year 1956

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

49, LONDON ROAD,

HADLEIGH, ESSEX.

To the Chairman and Members of each of the Urban District Councils
of Benfleet, Canvey Island and Rayleigh.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

“ Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing
To what I shall unfold.” (*Shakespeare.*)

I have the esteemed honour to present, for your consideration, my Annual Report on the health and sanitary circumstances of each of your Urban Districts for the year ending 31st December, 1956, prepared in accordance with the requirements of Ministry of Health Circular 19/56 dated 11th December, 1956. This issue represents my 29th Report for the Canvey Island Urban District and my 27th Report for each of the Benfleet and Rayleigh Urban Districts.

On looking back over my many years as your Medical Officer of Health, I have thought it might be worthwhile to place on record a few personal reflections embracing those principles which have always been uppermost in my mind. Accordingly, in the first, I would say a Medical Officer of Health should always remember that he is the guardian of the health of the community, and as such is a servant of the public, leading a team of trained personnel on their behalf. In the second, whatever problem arises, his approach should be guided by a sense of urgency, always remembering ‘ first things first.’ In the third, wherever possible he should examine complaints personally and give as much time as may be needed to investigation on the spot. And lastly, he must ever remind himself that he is dedicated to the unending task of the prevention of illness, and should strive with all his might to further this end, using all facilities at his disposal.

In the early days the only access to Canvey Island at high tide was by rowing boat, and I can well remember waiting in the snow on the mainland for the small boat to ‘ load up ’ on the Canvey side of the Creek before the oarsman would row across and pick up a lone Medical Officer in pursuit of his duties !. The opening of the Bridge in 1931 saw the commencement of a new era for Canvey Island. Since then, there have been many changes and achievements throughout the three areas, to the lasting credit of each Local Authority concerned. Undoubtedly the provision of drains, sewers, piped water supply, roadways and refuse disposal are those public services which carry the obvious credit, but there are numerous other praiseworthy factors which could be listed.

Reflection can sometimes recall experiences that are best forgotten, although in recounting the past I cannot overlook the tragedy of the Flood Disaster which befell Canvey Island and other low-lying areas of the Essex coast-line in the early hours of Sunday, 1st February, 1953. The involvements were many and difficult, as all who took part in the rescue, evacuation and rehabilitation operations will remember. Public Health problems were serious and a heavy burden rested upon my Department, particularly the local Senior Public Health Inspector, Mr. Donald J. Legg. Flood water had become polluted by the Island's sewage, and there was a danger of large-scale illness caused by contaminated food and water. Fortunately, however, there were no outbreaks of illness and not a single case of serious infectious disease was reported. Sir Allen Daley, B.Sc., M.D., D.P.H., F.R.C.P., late Medical Officer of Health to the London County Council, commenting in the *Bulletin of Hygiene* on my account of the Flood Disaster which appeared in the medical press, wrote : " This is a plain factual story of how a health department coped quite successfully with an unusual and very serious emergency which arose without warning in the early hours of a bitterly cold and stormy Sunday morning. Public Health is not really the 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. job, with every week-end off, which some people think it is."

For the benefit of Members, it may be of interest to recall that I was appointed Medical Officer of Health for Canvey Island on the 1st January, 1929 ; the Urban District having been formed on 1st April, 1926. My appointment as Medical Officer to the Benfleet and Rayleigh Councils took effect from the 1st January, 1930, following their constitution on 1st October, 1929.

In taking stock, the following facts are worthy of consideration.

Population. The official estimate of the resident population of the area covered by the three Urban Districts in 1930 was 21,686. The mid 1956 estimate of the Registrar General was 48,660, representing an increase of 124%.

Vital Statistics. Nowadays, this term is usually associated with a certain assessment of the feminine sex, but in a rapidly changing world this travesty of basic English in no way detracts the Medical Officer's mind from the progress made in the field of real vital statistics over the past 26 years. In 1930 some 66 babies in every 1,000 live births in these Districts died before reaching their first birthday. The average loss over the past five years has been reduced to 27 in every 1,000.

Infectious Disease. In 1930, with the population of these Districts less than half of what it is today, there were 17 deaths from Tuberculosis and 5 from Diphtheria. In 1956 the only deaths from infectious disease were attributed to Tuberculosis, and numbered five. In 1930 there were 32 cases of Diphtheria notified in the Benfleet, Canvey Island and Rayleigh Urban Districts, but there have been no notified cases since 1948.

When I assumed office, the annual death roll from Diphtheria throughout England and Wales was around 3,500 and in 1930 there were 74,000 notified cases in the country. In 1956 there were only 8 deaths

and 51 cases. What a difference ! The answer to this great improvement comes in one word, namely, IMMUNISATION. In 1939, despite opposition on account of cost, it was my privilege to introduce the first local scheme for immunisation against Diphtheria in these Districts, although the national scheme, provided at Government expense, followed in 1941. With so few cases of Diphtheria coming to public notice these days the menace of this deadly disease is inclined to be overlooked by young parents of the present generation ; but I should like to say with all the emphasis at my command that the danger still exists, and if the level of immunisation among new-born babies continues to fall, the danger of infection from Diphtheria will rapidly increase. Parents have a duty to see that their children are immunised against Diphtheria during the first year of life.

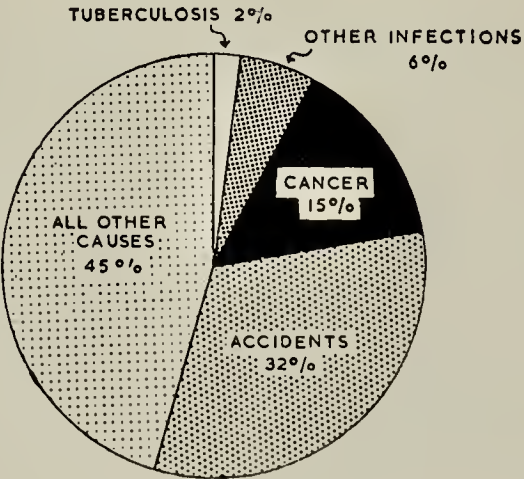
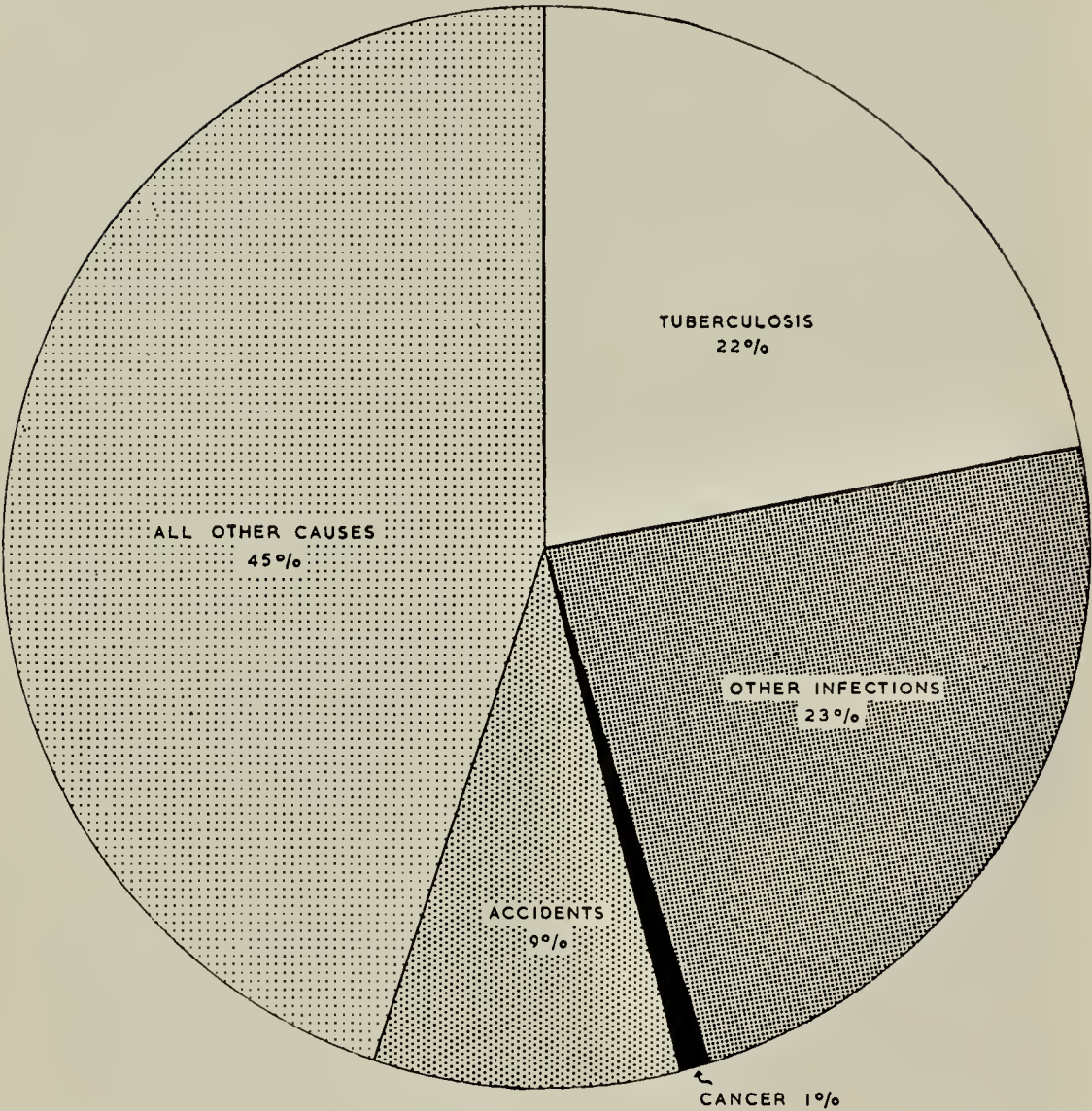
The decline in mortality and incidence among infectious diseases generally, with the exception of Acute Poliomyelitis, has been a significant characteristic of this country in recent years, and another classic example is Smallpox. In 1930 there were 11,839 notified cases in England and Wales and five in these areas. Nowadays isolated cases only occur when infection is imported into the country by travellers from abroad, and I am glad to say that no cases have occurred locally for many years. There is little doubt that vaccination, coupled with vigilance and control provided by the Public Health Service, has been responsible for this great improvement. However, like immunisation, there is cause to stress vaccination against Smallpox, which, since the introduction of the National Health Service, has been on a voluntary basis. The protection of the nation against the continued menace of virulent Smallpox, particularly in these days of fast inter-continental travel depends on the maintenance of a high level of vaccination.

Other diseases which, because of the steady advance of medical science, have been subject to increasing retreat, are mentioned briefly as follows. Tuberculosis claimed 35,745 lives in 1930, but only 6,492 in 1956. Mortality from Measles fell from 4,400 to 30 and Cerebro-spinal Meningitis from 664 to 190, in the same period. These figures refer to England and Wales, the population of which increased by 10.9%.

The diagrams on the following page, which are reproduced with the permission of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office, and extracted from the Registrar General's Quarterly Return No. 433 in respect of Births, Deaths and Marriages, Infectious Diseases, Weather and Population Estimates for the quarter ended 31st March, 1957, indicate in a realistic manner the change in child mortality since the year 1911. However, although the position has shown a vast improvement respecting children dying from tuberculosis and other infectious diseases, the rise in the proportion of deaths within the age group caused by cancer and accidents should be noted with apprehension. Preventive measures, in respect of the prevention of accidents, whatever the cause, should be intensified by all who have children in their care.

Proportionate Mortality of Children aged 5-14 years ;
England and Wales, 1911 and 1955.

1911	..	19,878 deaths at ages 5-14 years.
1955	..	2,753 deaths at ages 5-14 years.



The fact that we are living in a changing world cannot be more clearly seen than in the duties and responsibilities of the Medical Officer of Health. As will be appreciated, the control of infectious diseases was his primary function in bygone years. Today the pattern has changed and developed with an unending scope. Some of the pressing problems which now confront the M.O.H. are as follows :

- (a) Lung Cancer and Respiratory Diseases (all aggravated by increasing atmospheric pollution) ;
- (b) Coronary Heart Disease (the result of strain, stress and modern tension) ;
- (c) Poliomyelitis (threatening to replace other infectious diseases now largely controlled) ;
- (d) Rheumatic and Arthritic Diseases (the greatest health menace to industry) ;
- (e) Road and Home Accidents (an ever increasing problem) ;
- (f) Welfare of the Aged (one in nine of the country's population is over 65 years of age and the proportion is higher in these Districts) ;
- (g) Nutrition (many diseases and conditions of ill-health are caused by improper diet and vitamin deficiency).

The Medical Officer of Health is in the front line of attack against these and innumerable other problems and is ever seeking the integration of the various self-contained and water-tight statutory bodies engaged in the National Health Service for the common good of all.

Much useful work is undertaken by the Medical Research Council in conjunction with the Ministry of Health, particularly respecting Lung Cancer and Poliomyelitis, and by the Central Council for Health Education in the provision of health propaganda. Valuable aid is provided by the National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis, the Empire Rheumatism Council, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, the National Spastic Society, the National Corporation for the Care of Old People, and a great number of other voluntary societies seeking to alleviate suffering and loneliness.

At this point I must lay no small measure of emphasis on the great voluntary spirit of the people of this country. In a Welfare State many feared that this age-old tradition would be stifled and superseded by the State machine, but since 1948 experience has proved that there is no substitute for voluntary aid. Indeed, without the assistance of the great army of voluntary helpers, locally as well as nationally, much human need would be left unprovided for. There is scope for us all in some way or other, without thought of reward, to help those of our fellow men less fortunate in health and circumstances than ourselves.

However, despite the obvious increasing emphasis which Preventive Medicine demands, in this modern atomic and space age, curative medicine still claims the lion's share of National Health Service finance, leaving only the crumbs for those who seek to prevent disease. Mental health reflects the price of modern living. In 1929 some 20,000 persons were admitted to mental hospitals in the country, but in 1956 the figure had risen to 100,000. Furthermore, it is stated with authority that one in every three people seeking medical advice are suffering from some form of emotional disturbance. In view of present day trends, far greater shares of Health Service monies should be allocated for the prevention of illness. These are days of equality and alleged sensible balance, but the beggar has had to exist on the rich man's crumbs far too long. Surely it is useless to shut the stable door when the horse is gone !

Then there is another important philosophy, so often neglected, if health is to be obtained and maintained. Many doctors and a multitude of intelligent laymen are asking themselves a heart-searching question—" Why so much illness and disease and such a costly service in the face of the continuing advances of medical science ? " Hundreds of thousands of people today cannot carry on without drugs, and multitudes of others are leading an irregular mode of life to the detriment of personal health. I feel that the material outlook appears to be the predominant attitude of mind of many today, and this, in my opinion, can unwittingly lead to a variety of forms of mental sickness, fearfulness and unhappiness. Health has always been considered threefold—physical, mental and spiritual, but neglect of the latter, in my view, eliminates valuable invisible defences against disease, both physical and mental.

No man in this life can pride himself in his independence, and this is specially true in the Health Service, whether Hospital Specialist, General Practitioner or Medical Officer of Health. Accordingly, I readily pay tribute to the valuable help which I have received from the various branches of the medical profession, including the Public Health Laboratory Service, and above all to the family doctors in the three Districts for their continued co-operation and goodwill. The partnership between the General Practitioner and the Medical Officer of Health is of paramount importance and throughout my period of office through the years I have always received much valued help from the family doctor. Without this, my task would have been impossible.

The year 1956 brought new involvements and a new name for the Inspectorial Staff. The term "Sanitary Inspector" had long been considered a very narrow and inadequate description for these Officers in view of the widening scope of their responsibilities, and on the 2nd August, 1956, their name was officially changed by Act of Parliament to that of "Public Health Inspector." New legislation—the Food & Drugs Act, 1955, the Food Hygiene Regulations made thereunder, and the Clean Air Act, 1956—the effect of which began to be felt in 1956, and will continue with increasing effect, imposed considerable additional work on these already very busy Officers.

To my staff, inspectorial and clerical, I continue to be as deeply indebted as ever, and their faithfulness, efficiency and loyalty has resulted in teamwork of the highest order, which will always remain in my memory. To my Locum, Dr. P. G. C. Jones of Hockley, I am most grateful for his valued assistance for several years during my annual holiday and on other occasions when I have been unable to act. The assistance I have always received from the Chief Officers of the three Authorities has been most valuable, although it is to the Members themselves I am particularly indebted for their sympathetic consideration of the many and difficult Public Health problems which have arisen. To all concerned, I respectfully offer my sincere thanks.

On this occasion I should like to place on record my personal thanks to my Secretary, Mr. R. F. Stripp, for his loyal and devoted service over the years, and in particular for the work he carries out on my Annual Report.

I beg to remain,

Your obedient Servant,

NORMAN LORRAINE,

F.R.S.E., M.D., Ch.B., D.P.H., R.C.P.S.(Edin.)
& R.F.P.S.(Glas.), M.R.S.H.

November, 1957.

PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEES

Benfleet Urban District—

Councillor H. R. Bridge (Chairman) (until October, 1956)
Councillor L. A. G. Cunningham
Councillor J. E. Daniels
Councillor Mrs. L. F. A. Everett
Councillor G. H. FitzGerald
Councillor Mrs. M. Goodfellow
Councillor A. H. Hall (Vice-Chairman of Council)
Councillor A. R. Hart, J.P. (Chairman of Council)
Councillor E. E. J. Jeanes
Councillor T. C. Rigden
Councillor I. J. Smith (Chairman from October, 1956)

Canvey Island Urban District—

Councillor A. T. F. Bishop, J.P.
Councillor L. G. Cook
Councillor Mrs. D. G. Elkington
Councillor H. P. Fielder, T.D., J.P. (Chairman of Council)
Councillor Mrs. B. V. Littlewood
Councillor G. H. Prince
Councillor G. E. Smerdon
Councillor C. J. Taylor (Vice-Chairman of Council)
Councillor H. C. Whitcomb (Chairman)

Rayleigh Urban District—

Councillor Mrs. M. B. Blower
Councillor E. G. Collins
Councillor Mrs. F. M. Cottee, J.P.
Councillor Mrs. M. B. D. Green (Vice-Chairman of Council)
Councillor A. W. Hardwick
Councillor E. H. Lane (Chairman)
Councillor A. R. Mutimer, J.P. (Chairman of Council)
Councillor E. G. Pullen
Councillor E. Trippier
Councillor E. A. Wilding

COMPOSITE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE

Representatives for Benfleet Urban District—

Councillors H. R. Bridge (until October, 1956), Mrs. L. F. A. Everett, G. H. FitzGerald, I. J. Smith (from October, 1956).

Representatives for Canvey Island Urban District—

Councillors Mrs. E. C. Johnstone, Mrs. B. V. Littlewood.

Representatives for Rayleigh Urban District—

Councillors Mrs. M. B. Blower, Mrs. F. M. Cottee, J.P., E. H. Lane

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF

<i>Medical Officer of Health</i>	Norman Lorraine, F.R.S.E., M.D., M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., M.R.S.H.
<i>Locum to Medical Officer of Health</i>	P. George C. Jones, J.P., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., D.P.H.
<i>Secretary to Medical Officer of Health</i>	R. F. Stripp
<i>Public Health Inspectors</i>	J. E. Gilbert, M.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I., Senior Public Health Inspector, Benfleet U.D.C. P. Sanders, M.A.P.H.I., Additional Public Health Inspector, Benfleet U.D.C. Donald J. Legg, M.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I., Senior Public Health Inspector, Canvey Island U.D.C. A. P. J. Cook, M.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I., Deputy Public Health Inspector, Canvey Island U.D.C. E. H. Lloyd, M.R.S.H., M.A.P.H.I., Public Health Inspector, Rayleigh U.D.C.
<i>Clerical Assistants</i>	.. A. J. Hart, A.C.C.S., Benfleet U.D.C. Miss P. G. Solomons, Canvey Island U.D.C. Miss G. Ward, Rayleigh U.D.C. (Part- time).

LOCAL STATISTICS

	Benfleet	Canvey Is.	Rayleigh
Area (in acres)	6,360	*6,350	5,732
Inhabited Houses at 31st December, 1956 (according to Rate Book)	8,951	4,845	4,490
Population (1951 Census)	19,881	11,255	9,388
Population (Registrar-General's esti- mate for mid 1956)	23,250	12,190	13,220
Rateable Value	£283,391	£138,974	£156,425
Sum represented by a Penny Rate ..	£1,133	£549	£615
Rateable Value per head of the esti- mated population	£12.19	£11.4	£11.8

* Includes Foreshore and Saltings.

VITAL STATISTICS

	Benfleet			Canvey Island			Rayleigh		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
<i>Live Births</i> :	194	145	339	102	82	184	101	89	190
Legitimate	186	142	328	96	75	171	96	88	184
Illegitimate	8	3	11	6	7	13	5	1	6
<i>Stillbirths</i> :	4	6	10	1	1	2	2	—	2
Legitimate	4	6	10	—	1	1	2	—	2
Illegitimate	—	—	—	1	—	1	—	—	—
<i>Deaths</i> :	171	128	299	86	64	150	90	56	146
<i>Birth Rate</i> per 1,000 of the estimated resi- dent population ..	14.6			15.1			14.4		
<i>Stillbirth Rate</i> per 1,000 total (live and still) births	28.7			10.8			10.4		
<i>Death Rate</i> per 1,000 of the estimated resi- dent population ..	12.9			12.3			11.0		
<i>Death Rate of Infants under one year of age :</i>									
Total number of in- fant deaths ..	11			6			6		
All infants per 1,000 live births ..	32.5			32.6			31.6		
Legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births ..	33.5			35.1			32.6		
Illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegiti- mate live births ..	—			—			—		
Deaths of infants under four weeks of age	9			5			4		

BIRTH RATE

Benfleet U.D. 14.6 *Canvey Island U.D.* 15.1 *Rayleigh U.D.* 14.4

During the year there was a total of 713 live births in the three areas — 339 in Benfleet, 184 in Canvey Island, and 190 in Rayleigh. This was an increase of 52 or 7.9% over the birth figures for 1955. The average birth rate for 1956 was 14.7 as compared with 14.5 for 1955—the increased number of births being related to the increased population. Of the 1956 total, 397 were males (55.7%) and 316 females (44.3%).

This represents a male increase of 2.6% over the previous year. The birth rate for England and Wales during 1956 was 15.6, representing an increase of 33,377 live births over the previous year. Of the total of 698,331 throughout the country, 51.2% were males.

DEATH RATE

Benfleet U.D. 12.9 *Canvey Island U.D.* 12.3 *Rayleigh U.D.* 11.0

During the year there was a total of 595 deaths in the three areas – 299 in Benfleet, 150 in Canvey Island, and 146 in Rayleigh. Of this total, 347 were males (58.3%) and 248 females (41.7%). The predominance of male deaths prevailed in all three areas, with the proportion being highest in Rayleigh with 61.6%. The small increase in the total number of deaths (47) was proportionate with the increased population, and the combined death rate for the three Districts (12.1) remained practically the same as the previous year. The death rate for England and Wales during 1956 was 11.7—the same as the previous year. Of the total of 521,304 deaths throughout the country, 51.4% were males.

From the table on p. 14 it will be noticed that 220 deaths in Benfleet U.D., 103 in Canvey Island U.D., and 103 in Rayleigh U.D. were over 65 years of age, giving a combined percentage of 71.6. For deaths among residents of 75 years or over Benfleet District had the highest rate with 46.5%, the average rate for the three Districts was 43.7%. Causes of death show that 81.5% of all deaths during the year were attributed to either Cancer (101), Heart Disease (90), Coronary Disease (117), Cerebral Haemorrhage (87), Pneumonia, Bronchitis and Respiratory Causes (67), or Other Circulatory Diseases (23).

INFANT MORTALITY RATE

Benfleet U.D. 32.5 *Canvey Island U.D.* 32.6 *Rayleigh U.D.* 31.6

Local Infant Mortality rates are usually subject to considerable variation, and occasionally higher than average rates mar the overall picture. Although the rate for Canvey Island shows an improvement on the previous year, each area had a rate that was higher than the country generally.

The following averages are for the respective periods up to 1955. From these it will be appreciated how the local, as well as the national position, has improved over the years.

	England & Wales	Benfleet U.D.	Canvey Is. U.D.	Rayleigh U.D.
25 years	46	36	47	34
15 years	38	32	38	21
5 years	27	28	30	12

Fifty years ago almost 124,000 infants died during the first year of life, throughout England and Wales. In 1930 the figure was almost 39,000, and in 1956 it was down to 16,554.

The 23 infants who died in these Districts were classified as follows : Prematurity and conditions associated with the newborn, 13 ; Cerebral and other malformations, 4 ; Pneumonia, 3 ; Gastro-Enteritis, 1 ; and Heart Disease, 2. Eighteen of the infants died within the first four weeks of life.

Stillbirths during the year throughout England and Wales totalled 16,384 and represented 2.3% of all births, live and still. This is the same rate as the previous year. There were 14 local stillbirths, and these represented 1.9% of all live and still births in the three areas.

COMPARABILITY FACTOR

District	Factor	Number	Rate	Adjusted Number	Adjusted Rate
BIRTHS					
Benfleet U.D.	1.04	339	14.6	353	15.2
Canvey Island U.D.	1.08	184	15.1	199	16.3
Rayleigh U.D.	0.95	190	14.4	181	13.7
DEATHS					
Benfleet U.D.	0.88	299	12.9	263	11.3
Canvey Island U.D.	0.93	150	12.3	140	11.5
Rayleigh U.D.	1.03	146	11.0	150	11.3

The rapid development in the Rayleigh Urban District is reflected in the Comparability Factor above. Normally this adjustment, as far as these Districts are concerned, has the effect of highering the birth rate and lowering the death rate. However, this adjustment is in the opposite direction in 1956 for Rayleigh, thus indicating that the increased population arising from the building development has been mainly of younger stock. The same trend is evident in the other two areas, but to a lesser extent.

POPULATION

Benfleet U.D. 23,250 *Canvey Island U.D.* 12,190 *Rayleigh U.D.* 13,220

The estimated total population for England and Wales for 1956 was 44,667,000, representing an increase of only 44,000 or 0.0985% on the 1955 population figures. The natural increase (excess of births over deaths) was 177,657. Thus, after taking into account the usual increase occasioned by immigration, the extent of emigration can be readily appreciated. During the year over 70 visits were paid to the M.O.H. Office by persons proceeding abroad, and many of these visits involved families of four or more. It would seem that the most popular choice for starting a new life is Canada.

The total increase of population for the Benfleet, Canvey Island and Rayleigh Urban Districts during 1956 was 3,640 or 8.09% on the 1955 figures—over 80 times greater than the rate of increase for the country as a whole. Of this increase, 118 resulted from an excess of births over deaths and 3,522 from immigration. As in last year, the greatest increase occurred in Rayleigh with 15.1%. The increases in Benfleet and Canvey Island were 8.2% and 1.25% respectively. Judging by the rate of private building development, particularly in the Benfleet and Rayleigh Districts, the population in the area will continue to increase.

The slower pace of development at Canvey Island is undoubtedly associated with the set-back caused by the flood disaster of 1953.

Population changes since 1930 are summarised as follows—

Year	Benfleet U.D.			Canvey Island U.D.			Rayleigh U.D.
1930	11,900	..	3,530	..	6,256
1940	15,140	..	5,240	..	7,810
1950	19,720	..	10,800	..	9,474
1951 (Census)	19,881	..	11,255	..	9,388
1952	19,640	..	11,640	..	9,415
1953	19,770	..	11,750	..	9,539
1954	20,270	..	11,990	..	10,050
1955	21,490	..	12,040	..	11,490
1956	23,250	..	12,190	..	13,220

DEATHS AT VARIOUS AGES DURING 1956

Age	Number in District		Outward Transfers		Inward Transfers		Number of deaths which apply to District
<i>Benfleet U.D.</i>							
Under 1 year ..	1	..	—	..	10	..	11
1 and under 2	—	..	—	..	1	..	1
2 „ „ 5	—	..	—	..	—	..	—
5 „ „ 15	—	..	—	..	—	..	—
15 „ „ 25	—	..	—	..	—	..	—
25 „ „ 35	1	..	—	..	3	..	4
35 „ „ 45	2	..	—	..	5	..	7
45 „ „ 55	8	..	2	..	13	..	19
55 „ „ 65	17	..	—	..	20	..	37
65 „ „ 75	40	..	1	..	42	..	81
75 and upwards	84	..	2	..	57	..	139
Totals for Benfleet	153	..	5	..	151	..	299
<i>Canvey Island U.D.</i>							
Under 1 year ..	—	..	—	..	6	..	6
1 and under 2	1	..	—	..	—	..	1
2 „ „ 5	1	..	—	..	—	..	1
5 „ „ 15	—	..	—	..	1	..	1
15 „ „ 25	—	..	—	..	1	..	1
25 „ „ 35	1	..	1	..	—	..	—
35 „ „ 45	1	..	1	..	4	..	4
45 „ „ 55	2	..	2	..	6	..	6
55 „ „ 65	15	..	2	..	14	..	27
65 „ „ 75	27	..	1	..	20	..	46
75 and upwards	31	..	2	..	28	..	57
Totals for Canvey Is.	79	..	9	..	80	..	150
<i>Rayleigh U.D.</i>							
Under 1 year	1	..	—	..	5	..	6
1 and under 2	1	..	—	..	—	..	1
2 „ „ 5	—	..	—	..	—	..	—
5 „ „ 15	—	..	—	..	1	..	1
15 „ „ 25	1	..	1	..	1	..	1
25 „ „ 35	—	..	—	..	—	..	—
35 „ „ 45	2	..	—	..	1	..	3
45 „ „ 55	3	..	—	..	5	..	8
55 „ „ 65	9	..	1	..	15	..	23
65 „ „ 75	27	..	2	..	14	..	39
75 and upwards	39	..	—	..	25	..	64
Totals for Rayleigh	83	..	4	..	67	..	146

CAUSES OF DEATH DURING 1956.

		<i>Beaufort U.D.</i>		<i>Canvey Island U.D.</i>		<i>Rayleigh U.D.</i>	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
		171	128	86	64	90	56
		Total		Total		Total	
		299	299	150	150	146	146
1.	All causes .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..
2.	Tuberculosis, respiratory ..	3	—	1	—	1	—
3.	Tuberculosis, other ..	—	—	—	—	—	—
4.	Syphilis ..	1	—	—	—	—	—
5.	Whooping Cough ..	—	—	—	—	—	—
6.	Meningococcal Infections ..	—	—	—	—	—	—
7.	Acute Poliomyelitis ..	—	—	—	—	—	—
8.	Measles ..	—	—	—	—	—	—
9.	Other infective and parasitic diseases ..	—	—	—	—	—	—
10.	Malignant neoplasm, stomach ..	6	4	2	2	—	—
11.	Malignant neoplasm, lung, bronchus ..	6	—	3	—	3	—
12.	Malignant neoplasm, breast ..	—	5	—	2	—	3
13.	Malignant neoplasm, uterus ..	—	—	—	—	—	—
14.	Other malignant & lymphatic neoplasms ..	13	13	7	6	10	7
15.	Leukaemia, leukaemia ..	—	—	1	—	—	—
16.	Diabetes ..	—	1	—	—	—	—
17.	Vascular lesions of nervous system ..	19	23	17	10	10	8
18.	Coronary disease, angina ..	43	19	13	15	18	9
19.	Hypertension with heart disease ..	5	5	3	4	3	—
20.	Other heart disease ..	24	27	4	5	8	11
21.	Other circulatory disease ..	5	4	7	2	3	2
22.	Influenza ..	1	—	—	—	—	1
23.	Pneumonia ..	13	3	4	—	3	6
24.	Bronchitis ..	7	5	7	2	11	1
25.	Other diseases of respiratory system ..	2	1	1	1	—	—
26.	Ulcer of stomach and duodenum ..	2	1	—	—	—	—
27.	Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea ..	—	2	—	—	—	—
28.	Nephritis and nephrosis ..	2	—	—	—	—	—
29.	Hyperplasia of prostate ..	2	—	—	—	—	—
30.	Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion ..	—	—	—	—	—	—
31.	Congenital malformations ..	2	—	—	—	—	—
32.	Other defined and ill-defined diseases ..	12	5	—	—	—	—
33.	Motor vehicle accidents ..	1	2	9	5	4	4
34.	All other accidents ..	1	5	—	1	2	—
35.	Suicide ..	1	3	3	—	—	—
36.	Homicide and operations of war ..	—	—	—	—	—	—

SOCIAL CONDITIONS

These were described at length in my Report for the year 1954.

LABORATORY SERVICE

The three Districts continued to be well served by the Southend Public Health Laboratory at Balmoral Road, Westcliff-on-Sea for the routine bacteriological examination of samples of food, milk, ice-cream, water and sewage, and I am indebted to Drs. Margaret Wilson and R. Pilsworth, and their staff, for very helpful co-operation during the year. Dr. Wilson was appointed to the Directorship of the Southend Laboratory in September on Dr. Pilsworth's transfer to a similar position at the Chelmsford Public Health Laboratory.

I am advised that during the course of the year under review over 60 samples were examined involving milk, ice cream, water and other foods. A few of these examinations included portions of slaughtered animals from the Hadleigh Slaughterhouse.

Arrangements continued for the examination of specimens by the Counties Public Health Laboratories of Victoria Street, London, S.W.1, but it was not necessary to utilise this facility during the year.

AMBULANCE SERVICE

The Essex County Council's Ambulance Service continued to operate very successfully throughout the year, and the following summary of work carried out by the two ambulance stations in the area will give an idea of the immense value that this essential service has proved to the community.

	Thundersley Ambulance Station	Canvey Island Ambulance Station
Maternity	260	63
Accident	289	95
Other Emergency	621	177
Non-Emergency	10,682	1,829
Mileage covered	106,729	27,554
Miles per patient	9.0	12.7

The establishment of both personnel and vehicles remained unchanged during the year. At Thundersley there are two stretcher case vehicles and three sitting case vehicles with a personnel strength of 17, including the Station Officer and Assistant Station Officer. At Canvey Island there is one stretcher case vehicle and five personnel, including a Head Driver.

The procedure for calling an ambulance in an emergency is as follows. In areas served by the Hadleigh and South Benfleet Exchanges dial 999. In areas covered by the Rayleigh and Canvey Island Exchanges dial the Operator. Requests for an ambulance in non-emergency cases should be made by a responsible person to the County

Ambulance Officer (Tel. Chelmsford 4801), when it is necessary to state (1) if a trained nurse is required, (2) if a sitting case vehicle is required, and (3) in respect of a case of infectious disease, an indication of the nature of the disease as certified by the Medical Attendant. Requests for the removal of cases of infectious disease are normally made through the Medical Officer of Health.

The telephone numbers of the two local Ambulance Stations are as follows : Thundersley—Sth. Benfleet 2323 ; Canvey Island—Canvey 161.

LOCAL HEALTH AUTHORITY SERVICES

These are administered locally by the Area Medical Officer (Dr. W. J. Moffat), 153, High Street, Rayleigh (Tel. Rayleigh 831-2), and include—

Home Nursing, Midwifery, Health Visiting, Domestic Helps, and regular clinic sessions are held for ante-natal and post-natal care, baby welfare, dental treatment (for expectant and nursing mothers and school children), eyes (school children), minor ailments (school children), speech therapy, immunisation against Diphtheria and vaccination against Smallpox. Also, handicapped children and persons suffering from Tuberculosis get special care through the services of the County Council. Matters relating to mental health are dealt with centrally for the County by the County Medical Officer of Health (Dr. George G. Stewart), County Hall, Chelmsford (Tel. Chelmsford 3231).

Modern well appointed Health Service Clinics are situated at London Road, Hadleigh ; Kenneth Road, Thundersley ; High Road, South Benfleet ; Furtherwick Road, Canvey Island ; and Eastwood Road, Rayleigh.

HOSPITAL SERVICE

Patients needing hospital treatment are normally admitted to the Southend or Rochford General Hospitals by direct arrangement between the General Practitioner concerned and the hospital. In case of difficulty the Emergency Bed Service located at St. John's Hospital, Chelmsford (Tel. Chelmsford 4467) undertakes to find accommodation as near as possible to the patient's home. In certain circumstances the local Medical Officer of Health is requested to support applications for urgent priority. Cases of infectious disease usually go to the Westcliff Hospital, apart from serious cases of Acute Poliomyelitis which are sent to the Poliomyelitis Unit at Rush Green Hospital, Romford.

Further information on the hospital facilities for the area are published annually in the Handbook of the North-East Metropolitan Regional Hospital Board (Secretary, G. E. Nichol, O.B.E., 11a, Portland Place, London, W.1) or can be obtained on application to the Secretary of the Southend-on-Sea Group Hospital Management Committee (J. C. Field, F.H.A.) at the General Hospital, Rochford (Tel. Rochford 56471-5).

GENERAL MEDICAL SERVICES

All matters relating to the General Medical, Dental, Ophthalmic and Pharmaceutical Services should be referred to the Clerk of the Executive Council for the County of Essex (National Health Service) (E. Bergdahl), 131/3, Fillebrook Road, Leytonstone, E.11 (Tel. Leytonstone 1061).

A list of medical practitioners in these Districts was included in my Annual Report for 1955.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES

Water Supply

The water supply to this area is provided by the Southend Waterworks Company whose principal office is at 13, Cambridge Road, Southend-on-Sea (Tel. Southend 44424).

The recent Essex Water Survey conducted under the direction of Mr. C. H. Spens, M.I.C.E., Engineering Inspector of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, reports that about 80% of water supplied to the Southend Water Area (including these three Districts) comes from the Rivers Chelmer, Ter and Blackwater and is treated either at the Company's main works at Langford, near Maldon, or at the new works at Hanningfield. Such treated water is tested daily by resident chemists and bacteriologists before being pumped into supply. The remaining 20% of main water is derived from the Company's 20 wells and boreholes in the South-East Essex area, and is subject to analysis every fortnight.

Since August 1956 water from the Hanningfield reservoir, which was constructed, and is operated jointly by the Southend Waterworks Company and the South Essex Waterworks Company, has been pumped into supply, and there is provision for untreated reservoir water to gravitate back to Langford so that the Southend Waterworks Company's pumping and treatment plant at Langford can operate the supply at maximum capacity during periods of low flow in the rivers. The increased population in the South East Essex area consequent upon the creation of the Basildon New Town and particularly in respect of the extensive building development in the local authority areas surrounding the County Borough of Southend-on-Sea, apart from Southend itself, has necessitated the augmentation of the main supply, made possible by the new Reservoir at Hanningfield. It is also interesting to note that the Hanningfield Reservoir depends on the three rivers mentioned above for its source of supply.

Underground water, which is pure and reasonably soft, receives no treatment other than precautionary sterilisation with chlorine. The raw river water, however, is hard, coloured, and—like all river waters—subject to pollution. It is therefore stored at Langford in open sedimentation reservoirs, softened by the excess lime process and filtered through rapid gravity filters, to produce a satisfactory water with a total hardness not exceeding 150 parts per millicn. The working capacity of the treatment plant at Langford is eight million gallons daily.

The chief distribution problem in the supply area of the Southend Waterworks Company is the heavy incidence of external corrosion to iron pipes, caused by electrolytic action and sulphate-reducing bacteria in the clays in which the pipes are laid. This problem was mentioned in my Report for 1955 in respect of Canvey Island. Official reports indicate that this corrosion is so heavy that it has been causing, on average, two bursts in every three days, in the Company's area of supply.

All reports on laboratory tests during the year have shown that the water from the Company's mains is of normal chemical character and good bacteriological quality, and consequently, pure and wholesome and suitable for public supply purposes. During 1956 the supply was satisfactory both as regards quality and quantity, and no lead contamination of the water supplies was encountered.

In the **Benfleet** Urban District 99.8% of all dwelling-houses are connected to the main water supply. The supply is direct to the houses, there being no stand-pipes. Those premises not connected to the mains rely on supplies from rain-water tanks or shallow wells. Water main extensions of approximately 741 yards to afford a supply to 12 existing dwellings were made. Since 1948, the Council has arranged for the laying of 10,241 yards of water main and has contributed £7,687 toward the cost. All the 679 new houses and bungalows erected during the year were connected to the main water supply.

At **Canvey Island**, at 31st December, 1956, a total of 4,452 properties was connected to the main water supply, and a further 159 properties were provided with main water by means of stand-pipes. The remaining 234 properties not supplied with main water are in undeveloped areas and are mainly of the chalet type for seasonal use. A total of 132 properties were connected to the main supply during the year, including 50 new properties. Water main extensions during the year totalled 564 yards—216 yards being laid under guarantee of the Council, 120 yards on Council housing sites and 228 yards on private housing sites. Over the past nine years over 10 miles of water mains have been laid on Canvey Island and only uneconomic roads in outlying areas remain unprovided for. 320 inspections and visits were made during the year associated with the water supply, including extensions and connections thereto.

The remedial treatment given, e.g. the heavy lacquering of aluminium alloy fittings, appears to have been effective in dealing with the electrolytic action caused by the union of such fittings with copper service pipes, and few complaints have been received during the year.

The problem of taste and smell in isolated instances from main water at Canvey Island was investigated by the Chief Engineer of the Water Undertaking, and it was found that stagnation in "dead end" mains may have been responsible. Suitable action has been taken by the Waterworks Company, although no health hazard was involved.

In the **Rayleigh** Urban District 99.02% of all dwelling-houses were supplied with main water at the 31st December, 1956. Of this figure, 0.25% were supplied by means of stand-pipes. 461 new houses and one existing house were connected to the main supply during the year.

Drainage and Sewerage.

In the **Benfleet** Urban District it is estimated that 94% of all properties are connected to the main drainage system. During the year 19 existing premises were connected to the main sewer and three to cesspools, whilst extensions and improvements were carried out to the drainage of six others.

The extension of the main sewers on **Canvey Island** continues to receive the urgent attention of the Local Authority, and during 1956 a total of 2,214 yards of new sewers was laid to serve existing development in 22 roads. 153 properties were connected to the main drainage system during the year. Some 8 miles of sewers have been laid on Canvey Island since 1948 and 1,645 properties connected thereto over the same period.

The main drainage system in **Rayleigh** serves 90% of all properties and during 1956 461 new properties and five existing houses were connected to the main sewer. About 270 properties are served by cesspools and a further 191 are provided with earth closets.

The continual movement of technical staff from the Council to private firms has led the work of sewerage of private streets almost to a complete standstill. As these streets are within the development area and the vacant plots are being taken up for building, serious nuisances have arisen, and will become worse, unless adequate numbers of trained technical staff can be attracted to the local authority for the surveying of these roads.

Public Cleansing.

In the **Benfleet** Urban District 14 men with three vehicles are employed in collection and two men with a small bulldozer are engaged on disposal which is by means of controlled tipping on the Benfleet Marshes. The rapid expansion of the District has given rise to a repeated re-arrangement of the areas of collection for each team, with some unavoidable dislocation of the service. Further building on unmade roads has also presented some difficulties. These will be resolved when road building re-commences. Efforts to salvage all materials of value continued, and the sum of £1,133 4s. was received from the sale of such materials.

At **Canvey Island** a regular fortnightly collection of house refuse was made during the year. Trade refuse was collected free on the same basis, but most traders required additional collections, and payment was made for this according to a standard scale of charges.

Refuse is disposed of by controlled tipping, and the new disposal site on the Newlands Estate, recently purchased by the Council, was

brought into use during the year. The site contains huge "borrow pits," created by the excavation of clay for the re-building of the sea walls following the Flood in 1953, and these will take years to fill with refuse but, when completed, levelled and seeded, will provide useful land for future Council projects. Further "borrow pits" are to be excavated during 1957 to complete the widening of the Thames Promenade wall and infill the large surface waterway. Excavations have been arranged in "strip" formation to allow for easier tipping and covering.

The **Rayleigh** Urban District Council maintained a regular weekly collection of house refuse from houses in made roads. An endeavour was made to collect at fortnightly intervals from unmade roads but, on occasions, this was not possible owing to the state of the roads, usually made worse by the carriage of building materials to housing sites. It says much for the quality of the collecting staff that some of these roads were collected at all, and these remarks apply particularly to the vehicle drivers. Collection was made by two side loading vehicles of 13 and 10 cubic yard capacities.

Refuse is disposed of by controlled tipping, and for the first time a bulldozer was used regularly for dealing with the refuse. This resulted in an improved tip, and the greater consolidation eliminated the delays previously experienced when vehicles became immobilised on the soft surface.

Night soil was collected at weekly intervals from 91 premises.

155 tons of material was salvaged and provided an income of £1,266.

Factories Acts, 1937 and 1948.

In the area covered by the **Benfleet** Urban District there is a total of 75 factories on the register of the local authority. 71 of these premises employ mechanical power. Inspections were made on 63 occasions during the year and 9 defects were found. By the end of the year seven defects had been remedied by the occupiers. No legal proceedings were taken. Also, five work-places were inspected and six inspections were made at sites of building operations. Three contraventions were found, all of which were remedied by the end of the year.

The number of registered factories on **Canvey Island** at 31st December 1956 was 25, and all employ mechanical power. 28 inspections were carried out. There are a number of premises not included as they are not statutory factories, although factory processes are carried out. At such premises the operatives are self-employed. 23 Outworkers were registered with the Local Authority at the end of the year, and were engaged in the manufacture of clothing, Christmas crackers, card boxes and textile weaving.

The **Rayleigh** Urban District has 51 premises registered as factories, and 48 of these employ mechanical power. 21 inspections were made and two defects were found and subsequently remedied.

Moveable Dwellings.

(a) CARAVANS.

The **Benfleet** Urban District own and operate the Caravan Park at Hart Road, Thundersley. This is some 10 acres in extent and accommodates 204 caravans. The Park was opened in 1951 and had reached its present extent by 1955.

An overhead supply of electricity is available to afford connection to all pitches. Gravel roads and car parking facilities have been provided all round the Park which, together with slab paving, gives hard access to every caravan. 24 water closets, connected to the main drainage system, have been erected, together with 10 water points with gullies and drainage. A community hall of 600 square feet floor area, with kitchen, has been provided and is used on most evenings by the residents' social club. A bath house with six baths is in course of construction. The Park is laid out to provide ample greenswards, in which trees and shrubs have been planted.

The weekly site payment is 11s. There is a full-time resident warden and administration is carried out by the Public Health Department. That the Park meets an urgent need is clearly indicated by the fact that at the end of the year there was a waiting list of 85 applicants for accommodation.

There was also a private site in the District licensed for five caravans. There were no contraventions of the conditions attaching to the licence during the year.

There are six licensed Caravan Sites on **Canvey Island** and all are privately owned. The two largest, with accommodation for 1,500 and 60 caravans respectively, cater for a real housing need, although in the main the caravans are used for holiday accommodation only. The former of the two sites just mentioned is the largest site on the Island, and has concrete roads throughout, electric street lighting and full domestic facilities. All licence holders fulfilled the conditions of their licences during the year.

There still remain a number of individual moveable dwellings on private land, but only a few of these are permanently occupied. Many moveable dwellings have been replaced by permanent houses or bungalows since the lifting of building restrictions.

There are no caravan sites within the **Rayleigh** Urban District.

(b) HOUSEBOATS.

In the **Benfleet** Urban District 35 consents to moor houseboats in Benfleet Creek were issued by the Council under the provisions of the Essex County Council Act, 1952. Eight houseboats were removed or demolished during the course of the year as a result of notices served on the owners.

The only houseboats moored at **Canvey Island** are found in Small Gains Creek, apart from one large craft in Tewkes Creek which is permanently occupied. Most of the vessels are used for holiday accommodation only. The Council continues to take action for the demolition and removal of the craft which are land-locked in the portion of Small Gains Creek which was dammed following the Flood in 1953. 101 visits and inspections were made during the year in connection with houseboats.

There are five houseboats within the **Rayleigh** Urban District. One of these is licensed and steps are being taken to secure the removal of the others. None are permanently occupied.

Atmospheric Pollution.

In respect of Smoke Abatement, 25 smoke observations were made in the **Benfleet** Urban District during the year. No notices were served but advice was given in two instances. There were no smoke nuisances at Canvey Island and Rayleigh during 1956.

Odorous emissions from Thames-side Oil Refineries. The "Smell" nuisance first became evident in the Benfleet and Canvey Island areas about July, 1953, following the construction of Oil Refineries at Shell Haven and Coryton, closely situated near to the western boundary of Canvey Island and separated landward only by the Holehaven Creek. In October of that year the Principal Medical Officer to the Ministry of Health (Dr. Neil R. Beattie) advised me in writing that "the gases to which you refer have no obviously harmful effect on human or vegetable life at ground level."

However, in view of the continuance of the nuisance, I sent a further communication to the Principal Medical Officer on 3rd February, 1956, and enclosed a copy of a letter of protest, dated 12th January, 1956, addressed to the Minister of Housing & Local Government by the Chairman of the Canvey Island Urban District Council. Dr. Beattie replied, regretting that the nuisance still persisted, and asked whether there was any local evidence that the "Smell" from the refineries was contributing to actual disease amongst the local population.

Arising from this, an approach was made to a local office of the Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance asking for specific information on the incidence of respiratory illness in the area. In due course I was advised by the Senior Medical Officer of that Ministry in London that, in view of the additional work involved and for various technical reasons, it would not be possible to provide the required information, particularly as three local offices of that Ministry were involved (Basil-don, Rayleigh and Southend-on-Sea). In the circumstances therefore nothing further could be done to carry out the proposed investigation.

The only other possible relationship that might prove a likely guide was in connection with respiratory deaths. These are listed below for the years 1950 to 1956, and include deaths from Lung Cancer, Tuberculosis, Pneumonia, Bronchitis and Influenza. No significance can be attached to the figures shown in respect of any causal factors associated

with the “ Smell.” The high figure in 1953—the year in which the refineries commenced to operate—is attributed to the Flood Disaster.

RESPIRATORY DEATHS

	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956
Benfleet U.D.	32	59	35	45	37	37	39
Canvey Is. U.D.	28	34	26	48	20	28	19
Rayleigh U.D.	19	18	19	24	19	19	29
Totals	79	111	80	117	76	84	87

Lung Cancer, which will be discussed at greater length under the appropriate heading, was responsible for 25 deaths in these Districts in each of the years 1954 and 1955, and was the highest so far recorded for this disease.

Of course, there are other factors responsible for polluting the atmosphere and contribute to respiratory mortality, e.g. domestic smoke, industrial smoke and dust, exhaust fumes from motor vehicles, and, of more recent emphasis, cigarette smoking.

The “ Smell ” was detected on Canvey Island on 45 days during the year.

Many complaints of the nuisance were received during the year under review, and have continued since, but every effort is being made to remedy the situation, and the Alkali etc. Works Inspectorate of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government have the matter under constant review.

Atmospheric conditions play an important part in aggravating or minimising the “ Smell ” nuisance, as is also experienced with any other agent that pollutes the air we breathe. One Refinery has a mobile air testing unit in regular use, and takes samples of air over a wide area of Thames-side.

Pest Control.

(a) Rats and Mice.

In the **Benfleet** Urban District a total of 248 visits were made in connection with inspections for and treatment of rats and mice infestations.

At **Canvey Island** a total of 98 inspections were made during the year in respect of rodent control, and prolonged treatment was only necessary in one instance.

In **Rayleigh** 269 premises were visited and 72 premises were treated, but all were minor infestations.

(b) **Brown-tail Moth.**

Since the initial extensive control measures instituted at **Canvey Island** in 1949 the serious nuisance arising from the activities of the caterpillars of this moth has been arrested. Approximately £200 is expended on preventive treatment of breeding areas each year, and although complaints of infestations are still received from the public, involving the necessity for visits and inspections, the overall picture is satisfactory. During the year 85 complaints were received and 226 visits and inspections were carried out.

(c) **Vermin.**

No cases of vermin were reported in any of the three Districts during the year.

Pet Animals Act, 1951.

The **Benfleet** Council issued four licences in respect of the keeping of tortoises, chickens up to the age of one month, birds, and fish. Six visits were made to pet shops during the year, and conditions were found to be satisfactory.

There are no premises at **Canvey Island** registered for this purpose.

At **Rayleigh** two licences were issued during the year for the keeping of pets for sale.

Storage of Petroleum.

Routine inspections in each of the three Districts were made during the year in respect of applications to store petroleum spirit. The number of licences issued during 1956 was as follows—**Benfleet** 49, **Canvey Island** 12, and **Rayleigh** 20.

In addition, the **Benfleet U.D.C.** issued one licence for the storage of carbide of calcium and the **Rayleigh U.D.C.** issued one licence for the storage of cellulose lacquer.

At **Canvey Island** there are two bulk storage installations, namely, The London & Coastal Oil Wharves Ltd. and The Regent Oil Company Ltd. Additional over-ground storage tanks have been installed to cope with the increased demand. Large installations of this nature are governed by the Home Office, the Essex County Council and the Local Authority and close liaison is maintained. The licence issued in 1956 to The London & Coastal Oil Wharves Ltd. covered the storage of 27,000,000 gallons, and that issued to The Regent Oil Company Ltd. for the storage of 18,128,000 gallons.

Public Conveniences.

In the **Benfleet** Urban District there are four public conveniences owned and maintained by the Local Authority. One is situated at Rushbottom Lane, Great Tarpots; one at Rectory Road, Hadleigh (where a useful 'bus shelter is also provided); one at Victoria House Corner; and one at School Lane, South Benfleet. There are also toilet facilities at the Council's Cemetery at South Benfleet.

At **Canvey Island** there are five public conveniences provided and maintained by the Local Authority. These are suitably situated as follows : Long Road ; High Street ; Seaview Road (Promenade East) ; Labworth (Promenade Central) ; and Thorney Bay (Promenade West).

The **Rayleigh** Urban District Council provides a public convenience in the centre of the main shopping area.

Markets.

The only market in the three Districts is situated in **Rayleigh** and is privately owned. Business is held every Wednesday morning and the goods sold include foodstuffs and general items.

Infectious Diseases.

In the **Benfleet** Urban District the Public Health Inspectors made 25 visits to premises following the notification of infectious diseases. Disinfection was carried out at five dwellings.

At **Canvey Island** 64 visits were made in connection with cases and contacts of notifiable infectious diseases, the majority being in connection with the seasonal incidence of cases and contacts of Poliomyelitis.

The Public Health Inspector for the **Rayleigh** Urban District made 11 visits during the year for the purpose of investigating the circumstances associated with the occurrence of infectious diseases and of contacts of cases occurring in other areas. Disinfection was carried out in three cases.

General.

The Public Health Inspectors of the **Benfleet** Urban District made a total of 3,094 visits during the year. These are classified as follows—

General Sanitation	..	..	..	1,427
Food and Food Premises	..	..	..	1,143
Housing	..	..	..	485
Infectious Diseases	..	..	..	39

42 Informal Notices and 7 Statutory Notices were served. There were 34 Notices outstanding at the commencement of the year. During the year 57 Notices were complied with (24 having been served during the previous year), leaving 19 not complied with at 31st December, 1956. Legal proceedings were taken on one occasion and the nuisance was abated. A total of 84 complaints was received.

The Public Health Inspectors of the **Canvey Island** Urban District made 5,086 visits during the year. This figure reflects the considerable increase of work which mounts every year, consequent upon the endless stream of new Acts and Regulations and the steady growth of the District. Accordingly, it is becoming increasingly evident that, with existing staff which has remained unchanged for some years, the point

of saturation must soon be reached. The number of visits mentioned are summarised as follows—

General Sanitation	..	..	..	2,329
Housing and Repairs	..	..	..	648
Public Cleansing	..	..	..	557
Water supplies	..	..	..	320
Brown-tail moth	..	..	..	226
Nuisances	..	..	..	182
Food Inspection	..	..	..	150
Houseboats	..	..	..	101
Rodent Control	..	..	..	98
Atmospheric Pollution	..	..	..	81
Infectious Diseases	..	..	..	68
Miscellaneous matters	..	..	..	354

A total of 204 complaints was received during the year, of which 85 concerned Brown-tail Moth infestations, 37 housing defects, 37 general nuisances and 23 atmospheric pollution. The remaining 19 concerned water supplies, food and aged persons. 31 Informal Notices and one Statutory Notice were served during the year. A total of 41 Notices were complied with and at the end of the year six remained outstanding, although works were in hand in respect of these.

In the **Rayleigh** Urban District 1,471 visits were made by the Public Health Inspector, as follows—

General Sanitation	..	..	..	846
Food and Food Premises	..	..	..	140
Housing	..	..	..	243
Re-housing	..	..	..	88
Petroleum	..	..	..	17
Rodent Control	..	..	..	51
Infectious Diseases	..	..	..	15
Miscellaneous matters	..	..	..	71

A total of 116 complaints was received by the Department during the year. 24 Informal Notices were served and, in eight cases, these were followed by the service of Statutory Notices. 21 Notices were complied with during the year. Works were also completed in respect of 21 instances where the service of notices was found not to be necessary. The following is a summary of all the completed works referred to—

Houses repaired	..	..	..	7
Ditches cleared	..	..	..	2
Drains cleared after blockage	..	..	..	20
Houses connected to main water supply	..	..	..	1
Drainage systems re-conditioned	..	..	..	6
Food premises improved	..	..	..	6

School Lavatories.

The lavatory accommodation at Rayleigh Primary School referred to in my 1955 Report still remains in an unsatisfactory condition. It is anticipated, however, that the work will commence by the end of 1957.

HOUSING

Benfleet U.D.

During the year 34 complaints regarding housing defects were received and 26 Notices were served. 29 houses were repaired during the year.

Demolition Order procedure under Section 11 of the Housing Act, 1936 was taken in respect of four houses and three Orders were made. One Undertaking was accepted.

There were 410 applications for Council Houses on the waiting list at the end of the year, including 136 applicants for Old People's Bungalows. During the year 38 Council Houses were completed. A further 641 dwellings were erected by private builders.

No Improvement Grants were made.

At 31st December, 1956, there were 204 permanently occupied caravans on the Council's Residential Caravan Park in Hart Road, Thundersley. All available pitches were occupied and a further 85 applicants were on the waiting list for pitches as and when they became vacant.

Canvey Island U.D.

During the year a total of 648 inspections and visits were made in respect of housing defects and adverse housing conditions. Of these, 473 were made under the provisions of the Public Health Act, 1936, and 175 under the Housing Acts, 1936 and 53.

37 complaints in respect of housing defects were received and official action was necessary in 23 instances. In all of these cases work was in hand at the close of the year.

One Demolition Order was served and complied with, a Closing Order made in 1954 remained in force, and one property was rendered fit for which an Undertaking was accepted in 1955.

20 Council houses and 30 private houses were erected during the year.

At the 31st December there were 138 families on the Council's Housing List, representing a reduction of 60 on the previous year.

The two ex-War Department Camps on the Island continued to be used for housing accommodation.

Rayleigh U.D.

Seven houses were repaired or improved during the year following the service of Notices. One house was demolished as a result of a Demolition Order made in 1955.

No Council Houses were built in 1956, but 453 houses and bungalows were built by private enterprise. In addition, 12 bungalows for Aged Persons were built out of moneys donated for the purpose by a local resident. These will be administered by the local authority.

No Improvement Grants were made.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

Milk

In the **Benfleet** Urban District the following licences were issued under the provisions of the Milk (Special Designations) Regulations, 1949—

	Pasteurised		Sterilized		Tuberculin Tested
Dealers' Licences ..	17	..	48	..	4
Supplementary Licences	4	..	5	..	4

In the Benfleet District there were 52 registrations at 31st December, 1956, under the provisions of the Milk and Dairies Regulations, 1949, in respect of persons carrying on the trade of distributor. 31 of these registrations relate to grocers' shops in which occasional sales of sterilized milk (in sealed bottles) are made.

During the year 40 visits were made to milk shops in the Benfleet District and the following samples were taken—

Pasteurised Milk	6
Sterilized Milk	6
Tuberculin Tested Milk ..	1
Tuberculin Tested (Pasteurised) Milk	4

All 17 samples proved to be satisfactory on examination.

During the year a milk sterilizing plant was established in the District. 18 bottles were sent for bacteriological examination and all proved satisfactory.

The following licences were issued in the **Canvey Island** Urban District for the sale of designated milk under the Milk (Special Designations) Regulations, 1949—

	Pasteurised		Sterilized		Tuberculin Tested
Dealers' Licences ..	18	..	26	..	2
Supplementary Licences	2	..	3	..	2

The following licences were issued in the **Rayleigh** Urban District under the provisions of the Milk (Special Designations) Regulations, 1949—

	Pasteurised		Sterilized		Tuberculin Tested
Dealers' Licences ..	4	..	14	..	1
Supplementary Licences	1	..	1	..	1

No samples were taken during the year.

Meat Inspection

The Public Health Inspectors of the **Benfleet** Urban District Council paid 540 visits to the Slaughterhouse at Cross Farm, Hadleigh during the course of the year, and the carcasses and organs of 10,814 food animals were examined, as set out on following page :—

CARCASES AND OFFAL INSPECTED AND CONDEMNED IN WHOLE OR IN PART

	Cattle, excluding Cows		Cows		Calves		Sheep and Lambs		Pigs	
Number killed ..	1,422	..	289	..	1,496	..	5,107	..	2,497	..
Number inspected	1,422	..	289	..	1,496	..	5,107	..	2,497	..
<hr/>										
<i>All diseases except Tuberculosis and Cysticerci :</i>										
Whole carcasses condemned ..	—	..	6	..	4	..	2	..	7	..
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ..	227	..	80	..	3	..	126	..	47	..
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than Tuberculosis and Cysticerci ..	15.96	..	29.75	..	0.47	..	2.55	..	2.16	..
<i>Tuberculosis only :</i>										
Whole carcasses condemned ..	4	..	4	..	2	..	—	..	2	..
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ..	43	..	22	..	1	..	—	..	31	..
Percentage of the number inspected affected with Tuberculosis ..	3.3	..	9.0	..	0.2	..	—	..	1.32	..
<i>Cysticercosis :</i>										
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ..	25	..	3	..	—	..	—	..	—	..
Carcases submitted to treatment by refrigeration ..	25	..	3	..	—	..	—	..	—	..
Generalised and totally condemned	—	..	—	..	—	..	—	..	—	..

No horse slaughtering took place during the year.

One goat was slaughtered during the year.

During the year specimens from four animals were submitted for bacteriological examination to the Southend Public Health Laboratory. Also, one specimen was submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Laboratory at Weybridge. The Inspectors wish to express their appreciation for the ready assistance they received in these matters.

The improvement in the hygienic handling and transport of meat from the Slaughterhouse was maintained. The bulk of meat consigned from the premises is conveyed in vehicles in which the meat is suspended and not stacked on the floor. A cold room has been installed ; frozen meat is now handled, and carcasses affected with Cysticercosis are now treated on the premises. The boning out of carcase meat is now being carried out and the Company have been notified that a separate room and facilities should be provided for this purpose.

All slaughtering took place at the Slaughterhouse, Cross Farm, Benfleet Road, Hadleigh, which is managed as a private company.

There are no slaughterhouses in the **Canvey Island** Urban District but careful attention is paid to the distribution of meat and the vehicles used for this special purpose. Routine inspections of butchers' premises are frequently made and extra vigilance is ensured during the busy holiday periods.

There is one private slaughterhouse within the **Rayleigh** Urban District and is situated at the premises of Webster the Butcher, High Street, Rayleigh. Assistance in meat inspection is given by Inspectors from the County Borough of Southend-on-Sea as that area absorbs the majority of the meat distributed. During the year 8,699 food animals were slaughtered and examined at the Rayleigh Slaughterhouse, as summarised below :—

CARCASES AND OFFAL INSPECTED AND CONDEMNED IN WHOLE OR IN PART

	Cattle, excluding Cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs
Number killed ..	464 ..	87 ..	669 ..	2,019 ..	5,924 ..
Number inspected	464 ..	87 ..	669 ..	2,019 ..	5,924 ..

*All diseases except
Tuberculosis and
Cysticerci :*

Whole carcasses condemned ..	— ..	1 ..	— ..	2 ..	4 ..
Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned	121 ..	14 ..	1 ..	21 ..	125 ..
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than Tuberculosis and Cysticerci ..	26.1 ..	17.4 ..	0.15 ..	1.14 ..	2.18 ..

Tuberculosis only :

Whole carcasses condemned ..	1	..	1	..	—	..	—	..	1
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	29	..	19	..	3	..	—	..	74
Percentage of the number inspected affected with Tuberculosis ..	6.47	..	22.99	..	0.45	..	—	..	1.27

Cysticercosis :

Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	2	..	—	..	—	..	—	..	—
Carcases submitted to treatment by refrigeration	2	..	—	..	—	..	—	..	—
Generalised and totally condemned	—	..	—	..	—	..	—	..	—

There are no horse slaughtering premises within the Rayleigh Urban District.

Food Inspection

In the **Benfleet** Urban District 403 visits were made to the various food premises in connection with the requirements of the Food and Drugs Act, 1955 and the byelaws made under Section 15 of that Act. There were 191 food shops in the District at 31st December, 1956, summarised as follows—

Bakers	3
Butchers	17
Cafés and Canteens	33
Fishmongers	10
General Provisions	73
Greengrocers	17
Others, including Confectioners and Stalls	38

40 of the General Provisions shops are registered for the sale of milk, and also two other shops.

During the year the following foods were surrendered by food traders as being unfit for human consumption :—

Milk, 100 tins ; dried milk, 4 cwts. ; cream, 2 tins ; canned meat, 75 tins ; canned fish, 76 tins ; vegetable foods, 19 tins ; fruit and preserves, 49 tins ; soups, 10 tins ; meat, 440 lbs. ; fish, 342 lbs. ; sweets, 7 lbs. ; other foods, 3 tins.

Nine samples of dried milk were submitted for bacteriological examination during the year, eight of which were unsatisfactory. The whole consignment (4 cwts.) was accordingly destroyed.

All unsound meat from Cross Farm Slaughterhouse at Hadleigh is dyed before disposal. The Local Authorities of the areas to which meat is taken are notified. Other unsound foods are buried in the Council's refuse tip.

In connection with the Clean Food Campaign, routine visits are carried out at all food premises at least twice yearly. The visits are not made at regular intervals, nor are the occupiers advised as to the date of visits. Reliance is placed upon personal contact to advise and encourage food handlers in matters of food hygiene. At present the greatest obstacle to be overcome by the personnel of food preparing establishments is unsuitable premises and the lack of working area in kitchens.

A summary of the provisions of the Food Hygiene Regulations, 1955, which came into force during the year, was sent to all food traders in the District, and during the course of routine visits these were further explained and the attention of traders drawn to any shortcomings. During the year, three applications for exemption from Articles 15 and/or 16 were received, and one certificate of exemption from the provisions of Article 16 was granted. 13 Informal Notices were served. No legal proceedings were taken.

SCHOOL CANTEENS. The three School Canteens within the Benfleet Urban District were maintained in a very clean and satisfactory condition during the year.

STREET TRADING. There is very little street trading carried on in the Urban District of Benfleet, other than the house to house sale of greengrocery. 15 food hawkers and/or their storage premises were registered under the provisions of the Essex County Council Act, 1952.

MANUFACTURED MEAT PRODUCTS. At the end of the year there were 23 butchers' and grocers' premises and one factory in the Benfleet Urban District which were registered under the provisions of the Food and Drugs Act, 1955 for the manufacture of preserved foods, etc. 42 visits were made to such premises during the year.

ICE CREAM. There were 89 premises registered for the storage and sale of ice cream at 31st December, 1956 in accordance with the provisions of the Food and Drugs Act, 1955, summarised as follows—

Cafés	..	..	..	..	..	23
Confectioners shops	..	..	..	..	..	26
General Provisions shops	..	..	..	..	..	32
Miscellaneous shops	..	..	..	..	..	10

There were also two Depots registered for the storage of ice cream only. All the premises registered receive their supplies in bulk, pre-packed, from outside the District.

11 samples were submitted for bacteriological examination during the year, and the results obtained showed that eight were placed in Grade I, two in Grade II, and one in Grade III. Results showing Grades I and II are considered to be satisfactory. Also, three samples of water ice lollies and one milk lolly were submitted for examination. The milk lolly sample proved to be unsatisfactory. Copies of the Laboratory Reports were sent in all cases to the Local Authorities in whose areas the ice cream was manufactured.

At **Canvey Island** 150 inspections were carried out during the year under the Food and Drugs Act, 1955 and the Food Hygiene Regulations, 1955 made thereunder. Action was necessary in respect of the installation of new equipment and facilities in several instances, and I am glad to say that the co-operation of food traders was readily forthcoming.

There is a total of 121 food premises on Canvey Island, summarised as follows—

Butchers	12
Cafés	42
Fishmongers	5
Greengrocers	13
Grocers and Bakers	33
Others	15

A total of 70 food premises are registered under the Food & Drugs Act within the following categories—

Manufacturers of ice cream	1
Ice cream vendors	50
Manufacturers of sausages, and pre-served meats	18

The following foodstuffs were surrendered as being unfit for human consumption during the year—

One hind quarter of beef ; 11 stone of fish ; 212 tins of various foods.

SCHOOL CANTEENS. There are four School Canteens at Canvey Island, and these are all modern and well equipped.

ICE CREAM. At the 31st December, 1956 there were 50 premises registered for the sale of ice cream and one registered for the manufacture of ice cream. The majority of the ice cream consumed in the District is supplied by the nationally known manufacturers and manufacturers from Southend-on-Sea.

Of the 10 samples submitted for bacteriological examination, seven were in Grade I, two in Grade II, and one in Grade IV. Grades III and IV are not considered to be satisfactory and investigations were made at the premises of the one unsatisfactory sample. Subsequent samples from this retailer proved to be satisfactory.

In the **Rayleigh** Urban District 140 visits were made to food premises by the Public Health Inspector. The Food Hygiene Regulations, 1955 came into operation during the year, but it was not possible to make much progress towards implementing the relevant provisions owing to staff shortage.

During visits to premises where food is prepared or sold it is the practice of the inspectorial staff to discuss the processes with the proprietors and the employees, and it is thought that in these discussions much is learned by all concerned to further the progress of the clean food campaign.

There are 102 premises in the district where food is prepared or sold for human consumption, summarised as follows—

Bakers	3
Butchers	11
Cafés and Restaurants	16
Confectioners	20
Cooked Meat Manufacturers	2
Fishmongers	3
Greengrocers and Fruiterers	8
Grocers	27
Public House and Off Licences	9
School Canteens	3

There are seven premises registered for the manufacture of meat products and two for fish frying.

The following foodstuffs weighing approximately 1,939 lbs. were voluntarily surrendered by shopkeepers during the year and condemned as being unfit for human consumption—

Canned meat, 1368 lbs. ; miscellaneous canned goods, 435 lbs. ; sausages, 21 lbs. ; fresh meat, 61 lbs. ; bacon, 16 lbs. ; other goods, 38 lbs.

Unsound meat from the slaughterhouse is properly disposed of for processing completely disassociated with human consumption. All other condemned food is buried in the Council's refuse tip.

SCHOOL CANTEENS. There are two canteens where food is prepared, and one canteen where food is only distributed, in maintained schools in the Rayleigh area.

The two canteens where food is prepared are grossly inadequate for the number of meals served. The Education Authority is aware of the position and have plans for re-building, but the financial situation has so far delayed improvement. It is understood, however, that subject to the approval of the Minister of Education, a new preparation room to cater for 350 meals will be erected during the financial year 1958/59 at the Rayleigh County Secondary School.

ICE CREAM. There are no manufacturers of ice cream in the Rayleigh Urban District, but 36 premises are registered for the sale thereof. Ice cream is also sold in five cafés and the Cinema, but these are exempt from registration. No samples of ice cream were taken for analysis during the year.

INFECTIOUS AND OTHER DISEASES

There were no serious outbreaks of infectious disease in the three Districts during the year, although it is regretted that one fatal case of Acute Influenzal Pneumonia occurred.

Measles and Whooping Cough. As usual, the majority of the notifications received were in respect of Measles and Whooping Cough, amounting to 85%. Throughout England and Wales the incidence of Measles was minimal, following the regular biennial pattern, with approximately 160,000 notified cases as compared with 693,000 in 1955. However, in the Benfleet and Canvey Island Urban Districts there were nearly 400 notifications, with Canvey Island having the highest incidence (235) for some years. In both areas, the number of cases notified was higher than in 1955 which was a normal "Up" year in the biennial cycle. In 1955 the local incidence occurred in March and April, and in 1956, in November and December—a little less than the usual two year cycle. It is remarkable to observe that Rayleigh remained practically free from Measles in 1956. Whooping Cough is generally prevalent in an area when Measles is present, although on this occasion it preceded Measles in the Benfleet area. Both Benfleet and Canvey Island had the highest number of notified cases of Whooping Cough for some years.

Poliomyelitis. Plans for the vaccination of a limited number of children born between 1947 and 1954 inclusive were first announced by the Ministry of Health in January, 1956. Over 176,000 selected eligible children throughout the country received two injections, each of 1 cc, of British Salk-type Vaccine, by the end of the year. In Essex, 6,880 children were vaccinated out of 73,666 children whose parents had accepted the offer of vaccination. 220,000 children in the age group were eligible in Essex. In these Districts, it is estimated that 200 children received their two injections during the year. The administration of this Service locally is undertaken by the Essex County Council as Local Health Authority.

The extent of the Poliomyelitis Vaccination Scheme in 1956 was necessarily very limited owing to the need for caution and experience in the manufacture and use of the vaccine, but by the end of the year the Ministry of Health had plans for a considerable extension of the programme during 1957.

I am glad to say that in these areas no cases of Poliomyelitis were notified during the year, although information was received in June of a "missed" case. This concerned a boy aged 7 years from South Benfleet who was, at that time, receiving treatment at The Hospital for Sick Children at Great Ormond Street, London, W.C.1. Apparently he suffered from an Influenza-like illness in March and was subsequently found to have weakness in the legs involving a drop left foot and muscle wasting in the calf of the right leg. Throughout England and Wales there were 3,205 notified cases, a little over half of which were paralytic. Fatal cases in England and Wales during 1956 numbered 114. As usual, it was necessary to keep a strict watch on all local contacts of cases of Poliomyelitis from other areas, particularly at Canvey Island, and I am glad to say there were no involvements.

Scarlet Fever. Only 23 cases of Scarlet Fever were notified in these Districts during 1956 and these presented no administrative difficulties.

Influenza. The sudden death from Influenzal Pneumonia involved a man aged 51 years from Hadleigh. The onset was 7th March, but the medical practitioner was not called in until early on the 10th March, on which day he was admitted to hospital and died. Influenza Virus "A" was isolated from specimens submitted to the Central Public Health Laboratory at Colindale. The man's wife was also admitted to hospital at the same time, and although she became seriously ill, she pulled through. Virus "A" was also isolated in her case. A son, aged 19 years, was similarly ill at home, but recovered without complication. This appeared to be an isolated instance of an unwelcome infection.

Food Poisoning. The four cases of Food Poisoning from the Benfleet District occurred in Thundersley in July, and it was thought that tongue, which was purchased, cooked and salted in Wales some five days earlier, may have been responsible.

A grandmother aged 65 years and a grand-daughter aged 8 years, from a poultry farm at Thundersley, were admitted to hospital in September and found to be suffering from Salmonella Typhi-murium (food poisoning infection). It was believed that infection may have arisen through contact with diseased poultry (coccidiosis), although laboratory confirmation was not established.

Another case of Salmonella Typhi-murium from Rayleigh occurred in October, but investigations failed to trace any possible source of infection.

Dysentery. A woman from Thundersley, aged 34 years, who had been receiving treatment at the Rochford General Hospital for a dis-associated condition, was re-admitted five days after discharge and found to be suffering from Sonne Dysentery. She was transferred to the Westcliff Hospital, the case being notified to the Southend County Borough.

Contacts of cases of Sonne Dysentery from other areas, particularly among holiday-makers at Canvey Island, were kept under supervision at the request of the Medical Officers of Health of their home districts.

Gastro-enteritis. Two infants, aged three weeks and three months respectively, were admitted to hospital during the year on account of Gastro-enteritis. Unfortunately the younger infant died and is included in the "Deaths under one year" on page 10. This condition is not notifiable.

Meningococcal Infection. A child aged 11 months was admitted to hospital on the 26th July with an obscure condition, having been under the care of the local medical attendant since onset on 10th July. A diagnosis of Cerebro-spinal Meningitis was subsequently made and the case was notified to the Southend County Borough. The child recovered and was discharged after two weeks in hospital.

Malaria. The case of Malaria from South Benfleet concerned a man aged 57 years of age who had been at sea 14 days before admission to hospital, and had been put ashore from his cargo vessel in West Africa. He had not suffered from Malaria previously.

Cancer

In his Annual Report as Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Health, Sir John Charles wrote : " No single or general method of preventing or curing cancers is in sight, and although early diagnosis and early treatment remain the best hope for many cancers, there are not a few types of malignant disease in which the possibility of identifying some specific environmental factor now exists." Sir John's further comment was that our immediate task is to ensure that the preventive approach to cancer is not neglected, but encouraged.

Whilst it is appreciated that all forms of cancer are disorders of cell growth, the basic question is why and how the disorder takes place. Many causes have been identified and preventive measures taken, such as scrotal cancers of chimney sweeps and mule spinners, bladder cancers of chemical workers, and bone cancers of workers with luminous paint, but the majority of cancers are still caused by unknown factors.

The latest preventive achievement in medical scientific research is the discovery of a statistical association between cigarette smoking and respiratory cancers. Although much disputed by the hardened smoker, and more so by the much concerned manufacturers, there seems little doubt that there is a direct cause and effect in this matter.

During the year under review, Dr. Richard Doll and Professor A. Bradford Hill issued their second report on the deaths of British doctors whose smoking habits had previously been ascertained. Over a period of 53 months some 1,714 deaths occurred amongst the 34,484 male and 6,207 female doctors included in the survey. Of these deaths, 81 were certified as due to lung cancer and in three other cases lung cancer was cited as a contributory cause. The mortality figures confirmed that the death rate from lung cancer rose in proportion to the amount smoked, and the significance of a smoker giving up smoking was emphasised. The figures showed that the mortality rate from lung cancer was lower amongst those giving up smoking and diminished progressively with the increase in time during which smoking had been given up. Habitual smokers are thus deprived of the consolation of "it's too late for me to stop now."

In the following table it will be observed that in England and Wales there has been an increase of 19.6% of all cancer deaths since 1946. In that year the ratio was 51:49 (females/males). In 1956 it was 53:47 (males/females). This reversion of cancer mortality in the sexes has been largely due to the rapid increase of lung cancer in men. Deaths from lung cancer in 1946 totalled 9,613, of which 7,791 were males. The 1956 figures were 18,186 and 15,615 respectively, representing an increase of 100.4% in males and 41.1% in females. Of the national increase in cancer mortality since 1946, at 15,194, 8,573 were lung cancer deaths of which 91.3% were males. In point of fact, apart from lung cancer, there was a drop in cancer deaths of all other sites among males, during 1956.

Turning to the local aspect of the following table, it will be observed that cancer mortality in 1956 represented an increase of 29.5% over the figures for 1946. However, as there was considerable fluctuation from year to year, a calculation on the average increase of mortality has been made. This came to 18% and is a fairer comparison with the rate of increase for England and Wales. Another factor which must be taken into consideration when seeking to make comparisons is the increase of population. Between 1946 and 1956 the population of England and Wales increased by 9.99%. In these areas, the combined increase was 33.7%. It is therefore suggestive, despite the fears of atmospheric pollution from the Thames-side Oil Refineries, that cancer mortality in these areas is considerably lower than in the country as a whole.

CANCER DEATHS—1946 to 1956

Year	England & Wales	Benfleet U.D.	Canvey Is. U.D.	Rayleigh U.D.
1946	77,516	43	20	15
1947	79,784	45	31	22
1948	81,655	48	21	16
1949	83,204	46	17	16
1950	85,270	34	33	22
1951	86,080	44	30	20
1952	87,642	39	27	19
1953	87,924	42	24	29
1954	90,095	46	26	23
1955	91,340	44	35	26
1956	92,710	47	25	29

Increase of mortality 1946/56—

England and Wales	.. .. .	19.6%
Benfleet, Canvey Is. and Rayleigh U.D.s		29.5% or, on average, 18.0%

Population increase over period—

England and Wales	.. .. .	9.99%
Benfleet, Canvey Is. and Rayleigh U.D.s		33.7%

SUMMARY OF CANCER DEATHS DURING 1956

BENFLEET, CANVEY ISLAND AND RAYLEIGH URBAN DISTRICTS

<i>Site of Disease</i>	<i>Age Group</i>						<i>Totals</i>
	0—20 yrs.	21—40 yrs.	41—50 yrs.	51—60 yrs.	61—70 yrs.	Over 70 yrs.	
Bladder ..	—	—	—	—	1	3	4
Blood (Leukaemia) ..	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Bowel ..	—	—	—	2	6	5	13
Breast ..	—	1	2	3	3	1	10
Kidney ..	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
Larynx and Oesophagus	—	—	—	1	2	2	5
Liver ..	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
Lung and Bronchus ..	—	—	—	4	8	6	18
Pancreas ..	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
Prostate ..	—	—	—	—	2	6	8
Stomach ..	—	—	—	3	7	6	16
Tongue ..	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
Uterus, Ovaries, etc. ..	—	—	—	2	2	1	5
Unclassified ..	2	—	1	2	4	8	17
Totals ..	3	1	4	17	38	38	101

TUBERCULOSIS

The general picture in England and Wales over the past 15 years is that of a rapidly declining mortality, although the reduction in notification rates is very much slower. Improved case-finding, e.g. Mass Radiography, has resulted in earlier notification than formerly, and on the whole cases currently notified represent less infectious forms of the disease than ten years ago. The proportion of newly notified cases of tuberculosis (all forms) from which bacilli had been recovered had fallen from approximately 60% in 1938 to 41% in 1955. Nevertheless at the end of 1956 there were 351,212 cases on Chest Clinic registers in England and Wales. This represented an increase of some 8,000 odd cases above the 1955 figure. The number of new cases notified throughout the country during the year was 35,504—fewer than the previous year.

Mortality from tuberculosis fell by 17% during 1956, there being 4,853 respiratory deaths and 522 non-respiratory deaths in England and Wales. For respiratory tuberculosis the ratio of mortality between the sexes was 2.7 male to 1.0 female.

Another interesting factor was that during 1956 the number of occupied beds for tuberculosis fell by 4,300 throughout the country.

Conditions either favouring the transmission of the infecting organism or reducing the host resistance must lead to increased prevalence of disease. On the one hand overcrowded housing conditions or failure to isolate infectious cases from home or industrial contacts, and on the other hand malnutrition, fatigue and side effects of poor social conditions foster the disease. It has to be stressed therefore that the risk of infection from unsuspected or poorly supervised cases of tuberculosis, either within their own family or among workmates, is high and represents an especially difficult problem owing to the often silent character of primary infection and the effectively long period of "incubation" before symptoms of disease appear. The precise role of overcrowding in this connection is not clear since it is difficult to separate housing conditions from the whole complex of social conditions. It is also difficult to measure the individual effects of nutrition, occupation, local amenities or medical services and other environmental elements. However, it is clear that the disease thrives more strongly and persistently among the poorer members of the community and, since incapacitating the wage earner tuberculosis may worsen the living conditions, a vicious circle may be created. Tuberculosis is, in this sense, a social disease of primary importance.

Between 1951 and 1956 the number of cases shown on the Tuberculosis Registers of the Benfleet, Canvey Island and Rayleigh Urban Districts increased by 15.7% from 274 to 317, but increased population more than accounted for this increase of recorded notified cases. In actual fact, there was a slight fall in the relative number of cases. In 1951 the number of registered cases represented 0.68% of the population, whereas in 1956 the figure was 0.65%.

It should be noted that the 19 inward transfers of tuberculosis to the Rayleigh District in 1956 reflect the remarkable development of that area. This is the highest recorded number of tuberculosis transfers into any one of the three Districts in any one year. 13 of these cases came from the London area. Appropriate measures are taken to ensure that every encouragement to receive supervision and treatment is given to residents arriving in the area who are registered cases of the disease.

Deaths from tuberculosis are bound to fluctuate from year to year in a local area, but an indication of the improved mortality is shown in the fact that for the five years from 1946 there were 97 deaths in the three Districts, whereas in the five years from 1951 there were only 38.

SUMMARY OF CASES APPEARING ON TUBERCULOSIS REGISTERS AT 31st DECEMBER, 1956

Classification	Under 15 years		16—25 years		26—35 years		36—45 years		46—55 years		56 years & over		Totals	
	M F		M F		M F		M F		M F		M F		M F	
<i>Benfleet U.D.</i>														
Pulmonary ..	5	3	10	13	22	20	9	8	10	7	15	3	71	54
Non-Pulmonary ..	1	5	—	3	2	2	—	2	1	3	2	—	6	15
Totals, ..	6	8	10	16	24	22	9	10	11	10	17	3	77	69
<i>Canvey Island U.D.</i>														
Pulmonary ..	—	1	7	9	6	14	5	7	9	1	8	5	35	37
Non-Pulmonary ..	—	1	2	4	2	1	1	1	—	—	1	—	6	7
Totals, ..	—	2	9	13	8	15	6	8	9	1	9	5	41	44
<i>Rayleigh U.D.</i>														
Pulmonary ..	3	2	4	7	15	12	4	9	9	1	9	1	44	31
Non-Pulmonary ..	3	1	1	1	—	2	1	1	—	—	—	1	5	6
Totals, ..	6	3	5	8	15	14	5	10	9	1	9	2	49	37

SUMMARY OF NEW CASES ADDED TO TUBERCULOSIS REGISTERS DURING 1956

		Respiratory		Non-Respiratory		Totals
		Male	Female	Male	Female	
<hr/>						
<i>Benfleet U.D.</i>						
Notifications	..	12	3	—	2	17
Transfers	..	6	5	—	—	11
<i>Canvey Island U.D.</i>						
Notifications	..	6	1	—	2	9
Transfers	..	2	4	—	—	6
<i>Rayleigh U.D.</i>						
Notifications	..	1	1	—	—	2
Transfers	..	13	6	—	—	19
<hr/>						
Totals	..	40	20	—	4	64

SUMMARY OF PERSONS REMOVED FROM TUBERCULOSIS REGISTERS DURING 1956

		Respiratory		Non-Respiratory		Totals
		Male	Female	Male	Female	
<i>Benfleet U.D.</i>						
Left district	..	7	3	—	—	10
Recovered	..	9	4	—	—	13
Died	..	3	—	—	—	3
<i>Canvey Island U.D.</i>						
Left district	..	6	1	—	1	8
Recovered	..	4	4	—	—	8
Died	..	1	—	—	—	1
<i>Rayleigh U.D.</i>						
Left district	..	—	1	—	—	1
Recovered	..	3	4	1	1	9
Died	..	1	—	—	—	1
Totals		34	17	1	2	54

ACCIDENTS

The following summary of road accidents occurring within the Benfleet, Canvey Island and Rayleigh Urban Districts during 1956 has been kindly provided by the Chief Constable of Essex.

Although it is encouraging to notice that by comparison with the 1955 figures, road deaths during 1956 were halved, it is regretted that

the number of persons seriously injured rose from 111 to 132 or 19%, and those slightly injured from 225 to 261 or 16%. The number of persons injured on local roads during 1956 was the highest for the past ten years. It should be noticed that road casualties at Canvey Island are considerably lower than the other two areas, but this is doubtless due to the fact that there are no through roads at Canvey.

Group of Road User	Killed		Seriously Injured		Slightly Injured	
<i>Benfleet U.D.</i>						
Pedestrians under 15 years ..	—	..	3	..	7	
Pedal cyclists under 15 years ..	—	..	3	..	4	
Passengers under 15 years ..	—	..	4	..	7	
Pedestrians 15 years and over	2	..	6	..	5	
Pedal cyclists 15 years and over	—	..	9	..	16	
Passengers, 15 years and over	—	..	31	..	29	
Motor cyclists, up to 60cc. ..	—	..	—	..	1	
Motor cyclists, over 60cc. ..	—	..	17	..	16	
Drivers of motor and horse drawn vehicles	—	..	5	..	19	
<i>Canvey Island U.D.</i>						
Pedestrians under 15 years ..	—	..	1	..	11	
Pedal cyclists under 15 years ..	—	..	2	..	6	
Passengers under 15 years ..	—	..	—	..	5	
Pedestrians 15 years and over	1	..	3	..	2	
Pedal cyclists 15 years and over	—	..	3	..	4	
Passengers 15 years and over ..	—	..	5	..	9	
Motor cyclists, up to 60cc. ..	—	..	—	..	2	
Motor cyclists, over 60cc. ..	—	..	4	..	8	
Drivers of motor and horse drawn vehicles	—	..	—	..	1	
<i>Rayleigh U.D.</i>						
Pedestrians under 15 years ..	—	..	2	..	4	
Pedal cyclists under 15 years ..	—	..	3	..	8	
Passengers under 15 years ..	1	..	—	..	6	
Pedestrians 15 years and over	—	..	2	..	7	
Pedal cyclists 15 years and over	—	..	3	..	10	
Passengers 15 years and over ..	—	..	9	..	48	
Motor cyclists, up to 60cc. ..	—	..	1	..	—	
Motor cyclists, over 60cc. ..	—	..	13	..	15	
Drivers of motor and horse drawn vehicles	—	..	3	..	11	
Totals	4	..	132	..	261	

RAINFALL

Details of the rainfall during the year have been provided as follows.

Thundersley. The Southend Waterworks Company report that the records maintained at their Reservoir at Daws Heath show that 19.03 inches of rain fell during the year. The wettest months recorded were January (3.23) and August (3.01). The driest months were May (0.31) and February (0.45).

Canvey Island. The Engineer and Surveyor to the Canvey Island Council reports that 17.58 inches of rain fell at Canvey Island during the year. The wettest months recorded were January (3.23) and August (3.05). The driest months were May (0.25) and February (0.26).

WELFARE OF THE AGED

The County Welfare Officer has kindly informed me that at the end of 1956 there were 54 former residents of these Districts who were occupying welfare accommodation provided by the Essex County Council under Part III of the National Assistance Act, 1948. In addition, a further 15 persons were accommodated in voluntary establishments which are subsidised by the County Council under the provisions of the same Act.

I am glad to say that it was not necessary to implement the provisions of Section 47 of the National Assistance Act, 1948 in respect of the compulsory removal to suitable premises of aged persons in need of care and attention. However, a number of problems arose during the year in respect of the welfare of aged persons where the assessment of the need was difficult to define and accept by the appropriate authority.

In two of the areas it was necessary for the local authority to arrange burial of six former residents under the provisions of Section 50 of the National Assistance Act, 1948.

COMPARATIVE TABLE OF CERTAIN INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Infectious Disease	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956
<i>Benfleet U.D.</i>					
Acute Pneumonia ..	5	10	26	23	9
Acute Poliomyelitis ..	3	10	—	7	—
Food Poisoning ..	2	—	4	1	4
Infectious Hepatitis ..	6	—	2	1	1
Measles ..	67	222	61	109	154
Scarlet Fever ..	53	25	24	9	14
Tuberculosis ..	11	13	16	16	17
Whooping Cough ..	35	71	13	6	96

Canvey Island U.D.

Acute Pneumonia ..	—	3	14	52	14
Acute Poliomyelitis ..	1	—	3	9	—
Food Poisoning ..	1	—	—	1	—
Infectious Hepatitis ..	—	—	—	—	—
Measles ..	32	227	8	159	235
Scarlet Fever ..	36	8	8	1	7
Tuberculosis ..	7	4	12	13	9
Whooping Cough ..	19	21	30	22	42

Rayleigh U.D.

Acute Pneumonia ..	—	4	14	4	1
Acute Poliomyelitis ..	2	1	—	1	—
Food Poisoning ..	8	1	1	1	—
Infectious Hepatitis ..	6	6	6	—	—
Measles ..	7	84	4	135	2
Scarlet Fever ..	21	—	18	—	3
Tuberculosis ..	10	7	8	5	2
Whooping Cough ..	25	17	5	33	5

Note : Diphtheria—No cases have occurred locally since 1948.

Smallpox—No cases have occurred locally since 1930.

Cerebro-spinal Meningitis—Apart from the case reported on page 37, the last cases occurred in Benfleet and Canvey Island in 1950 and in Rayleigh in 1951.

CERTAIN CAUSES OF DEATH IN ENGLAND AND WALES DURING THE LAST FIVE YEARS

Disease or Cause	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956
Accidents (Motor Vehicles)	4,117	4,375	4,588	4,922	5,031
Accidents (Falls) ..	4,078	4,598	5,353	5,329	5,560
Acute Infectious Encephalitis	105	134	88	87	108
Acute Poliomyelitis ..	275	320	112	241	114
Cancer (Lung & Bronchus)	14,218	15,133	16,332	17,271	18,184
Cancer (all other sites) ..	71,382	70,672	71,616	71,844	74,497
Coronary Heart Disease	61,429	61,751	66,601	70,596	74,783
Diphtheria	32	23	9	13	8
Dysentery (all forms) ..	36	36	38	40	33
Influenza	1,750	6,465	1,811	2,983	2,625
Measles	141	244	50	176	30
Meningococcal Infections	290	291	259	205	190
Streptococcal Infections	64	61	52	45	43
Tuberculosis (all forms)	10,585	8,902	7,898	6,492	5,368
Venereal Diseases ..	1,619	1,445	1,420	1,385	1,372
Whooping Cough ..	184	243	139	88	95

CLASSIFIED SUMMARY OF ALL INFECTIOUS DISEASES (INCLUDING TUBERCULOSIS)
NOTIFIED DURING THE YEAR 1956

BENFLEET URBAN DISTRICT

Notifiable Disease	Cases included in Weekly Returns													Distribution				Sex		
	At ages													Deaths	Admitted to Hospital	S. Benfleet	Thundersley			
	At all ages	0 to 1	1 to 2	2 to 3	3 to 4	4 to 5	5 to 10	10 to 15	15 to 20	20 to 35	35 to 45	45 to 65	65 and over							
Acute Pneumonia	9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	7	—	4	1	5	3	1	8	1
Erysipelas	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	2	—	—	1	1
Food Poisoning	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	4	2	2
Infectious Hepatitis	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—
Malaria	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	—	1	—
Measles	154	2	11	13	14	17	90	6	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	6	106	42	74	80
Puerperal Pyrexia	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	—	2
Scarlet Fever	14	—	1	—	—	2	11	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	7	8	4	5	9
Tuberculosis	17	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	6	4	1	2	2	10	—	6	7	4	12	5
Whooping Cough	96	3	3	8	8	15	53	3	—	3	—	—	—	1	—	36	35	25	39	57

*Does not include new cases discovered at death, inward transfers from other areas or cases brought to notice by means other than formal notification.

CLASSIFIED SUMMARY OF ALL INFECTIOUS DISEASES (INCLUDING TUBERCULOSIS)
NOTIFIED DURING THE YEAR 1956

CANVEY ISLAND URBAN DISTRICT

Notifiable Disease	Cases included in Weekly Returns													Admitted to Hospital	Deaths	M. F.		Sex
	At Ages																	
	At all ages	0 to 1	1 to 2	2 to 3	3 to 4	4 to 5	5 to 10	10 to 15	15 to 20	20 to 35	35 to 45	45 to 65	65 and over					
Acute Pneumonia	14	—	—	—	—	—	3	1	—	2	1	4	3	—	—	8	6	
Food Poisoning	(4)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(1)	—	(i)	(2)	—	—	—	(4)	
Measles	235	4	23	13	35	23	134	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	126	109	
Scarlet Fever	7	—	—	—	1	—	6	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	3	
*Tuberculosis	9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4	1	1	3	—	5	—	6	3	
Whooping Cough	42	—	5	3	6	5	21	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	20	22	

N.B.—The figures in parenthesis indicate the number of cases in which the diagnosis was corrected.

*Does not include new cases discovered at death, inward transfers from other areas or cases brought to notice by means other than by formal notification.

CLASSIFIED SUMMARY OF ALL INFECTIOUS DISEASES (INCLUDING TUBERCULOSIS)
NOTIFIED DURING THE YEAR 1956

RAYLEIGH URBAN DISTRICT

Notifiable Disease	Cases included in Weekly Returns																Admitted to Hospital	Deaths	Sex
	At Ages																		
	At all ages	0 to 1	1 to 2	2 to 3	3 to 4	4 to 5	5 to 10	10 to 15	15 to 20	20 to 35	35 to 45	45 to 65	65 and over						
Acute Pneumonia	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Dysentery	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Measles	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—
Scarlet Fever	3	—	—	—	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	1
*Tuberculosis	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1	2	—	—	—	1	1
Whooping Cough	5	—	3	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3	2

*Does not include new cases discovered at death, inward transfers from other areas or cases brought to notice by means other than by formal notification.

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